

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY

Daily Meditations



JANUARY 2024



These meditations are available online
for computer, tablets, and smart phones
at:

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*Partners in Hope Recovery Society
is a Christian community
outreach organization
offering hope, support, and healing
through Jesus Christ
to victims of
harmful circumstances and dependencies,
as they reclaim the gift of their life.*

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JUST FOR TODAY

*Just for today I will try to live in conscious contact with God praying only
for knowledge of His will and the power to carry it out.*

*Just for today I will strengthen my mind. I will take a few minutes to
read and meditate on God's word, seeking God's perspective for my life
today. I will take note of one helpful thing God is saying to me and seek
to behave accordingly.*

*Just for today I will be joyful, optimistic, and grateful. I will take time to
notice the gifts in me, in others, and in my surroundings and let the rest
go.*

*Just for today I will adjust myself to what is and not try to adjust
everything else to my desires. I will trust that God is working all things
for good in my life.*

*Just for today I will be agreeable. I will not criticize, not find fault, and
not try to improve or control anybody except myself. I will pray blessing
on one person with whom I struggle to relate.*

*Just for today I will have a quiet half hour all by myself to relax and enjoy
all that God is giving me.*

*Just for today I will be unafraid, believing that as I trust in God with all
my heart and lean not on my own understanding, He will lead me along
a good path.*

*Just for today I will seek to serve others with kindness, doing what is
right, and walking humbly with God.*

***For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus,
so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago. Ephesians 2:10 NLT***

SOME AREAS OF ADDICTION AND DEPENDENCY

For a variety of reasons, many of us have an underlying structure of disorder that is damaging us and others. We invite God to show us the truth about ourselves so we can personally receive God’s forgiveness to set us free and healing to make us strong.

SUBSTANCE ADDICTIONS: Alcohol Caffeine Injected or smoked substances such as: Crack, Crystal Meth, Heroin Marijuana Prescription Medications Sugar Tobacco	BEHAVIOUR ADDICTIONS: Anger/Rage/Bullying Cutting Crime Eating Disorders: Bulimia, Anorexia, Binging, Obesity Gambling Hoarding Sex/Pornography Verbal Abuse: Gossip, Lying, Accusing Blaming, Condemning Violence (physical, verbal, cyber)
SOFT ADDICTIONS: Digital Use: (Time or Content) TV/Phone/Tablet; video games, Social Networking; Cyber-bullying; Online shopping; Gambling, Pornography Exercise Food (See Eating Disorders) Isolating/Sleep Money: Debt/Fraud Religion Shopping Sports Work/Achievement	RELATIONSHIP ADDICTIONS: Abusive Relationships: Includes: Intimidation, Isolation, Domination, Blaming, Humiliation, Withholding, Forcing acts against one’s will Approval dependency Attention Seeking Codependence/Rescuing Power/Control

PRAYER: FOR HEALING AND RESTORATION

Loving God, Thank You for rescuing us from the dark power of Satan and bringing us into loving relationship with Your Son, Jesus. We ask for wisdom and understanding from Your Spirit in order to live as people who honour You. Heal us. Make us new. Make us strong followers of Christ. Root us deeply in Your love. We place our trust in Your power that can do far more in us than we dare ask or imagine. Amen.



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PHOTOS

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How To Enjoy New Life With God In Recovery

God created us to have a wonderful life. In love, God planned for us and carefully put us together. God has always been calling out to us to enter into a relationship of love with Him. He doesn't force us but He invites us. Many of us have learned what a painful and confusing wreck our lives become when we try to live independently from God. Today is a good day to begin to live the full and rich life God intended for us. Nothing in our past can keep us from this life, if we want it and choose for it.

The 12-Steps remind us that our lives are unmanageable without the loving care of God and that we can get to know and come to believe that He is a power greater than ourselves. As we turn our will and our lives over to God's care, we find a solid foundation upon which to build a new life.

When we confess our sin and brokenness to God, repent and turn towards God, He gives us new life. When we invite God to come into our lives we find that He is ready and waiting for us. A simple Prayer: like the following, offered sincerely, establishes this new relationship with God that will last forever.

God, my life is unmanageable without you. You created me to live in relationship with you. There really is no good way to live on my own. Forgive me for not including you. I turn from my independent ways and surrender my will and my life to you. Thank you Jesus for dying on the cross for my sins and making a way for me to have new life and be filled up with Your Holy Spirit. Come into my heart and wash me clean. Teach me to do your will. Transform my way of thinking. Strengthen me to obey You in all I do. Amen

If you prayed that Prayer: sincerely from your heart, God forgives you and receives you. God makes you His son or daughter. God wants to show you how to live well and give you strength to do that every day. We would love to provide you with some information to support you as you move forward in your journey with God. Please contact us. You'll find our contact information on the front cover of this booklet.

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Happy New Year! There is a line in a Christian music song which says, God has "opened up my future, closed my past." This New Year's Day may generate that specific desire within each of us – a longing for a new beginning.

One of the ways people seek to make the New Year better than the old one, is to make New Year's resolutions which are commitments to personal goals, projects, or the reforming of a habit. The only problem with looking to self-determined New Year's resolutions is that statistics tell us that after only 9 days there is a 75% failure rate in keeping the resolutions.

If we think that's bad news, what about the statistic that tells us that 100% of people fail to live according to God's righteous laws? The result of that failure isn't just a few more pounds in weight on our bodies or a little more debt – it means death and eternal separation from God.

It is no wonder that we love to celebrate Christmas -- the birth of Jesus Christ. It is truly a wonderful life-changing event because the Bible tells us: ***But when the right time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, subject to the law. God sent him to buy freedom for us who were slaves to the law, so that he could adopt us as his very own children.*** (Galatians 4:4-5 NLT)

Before the beginning of time, God planned for each of us to live in a productive, loving, creative connectedness to Him. He planned for us to have the opportunity to daily walk and talk with Him. His desire was for us to know the peace and blessing that flows from a relationship with Him. However, humans often reject the ways of God and foolishly chose for their own ways.

Today is a good day to seek restoration with the God who created us, who alone can "open up our future and close our past." If we accept Jesus' death on the cross as payment for our sins, we are assured of God's forgiveness, and will experience life with Him forever. May this New Year's Day of 2024 be the beginning of a truly "Happy New Year" for each of us.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for Your beloved son Jesus who was willing to pay the debt of death for my sin. I choose to surrender my will and life into Your care and trust that as I faithfully follow You, Your good plans for my future will open up, and the year ahead will be my best year yet. Amen

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HAPPY NEW YEAR – EVERY DAY

Today as we begin to embrace this New Year and recover from the festivities of saying good-bye to the old year, let us reflect on what we would like to achieve in the months ahead. How can we do as Jesus commanded, and choose to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and to love our neighbour as ourselves? God loved us so much that He sent His son Jesus into the world to be our saviour. We can ask God to teach us how to love as He loves. Our Loving God will show us what needs changing and how to go about it.

We love because he first loved us. (1 John 4:19 NIV)

***Walking
an
unknown
way with
God is
more
secure
than
travelling
an old
familiar
path on
our own.***

Love covers a multitude of sins and goes beyond mere words. Sometimes love is demonstrated in silence, or in an understanding touch as one comes alongside another who has strayed from the recovery path. Love doesn't point a finger of accusation but encourages the one who has relapsed to get back on the road and continue the journey.

I cried to the Lord with my voice, and He heard me from His holy hill. Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.' (Psalms 3:4; Isaiah 41:10 NKJV)

We have a wonderful opportunity today, and in each day of this year, to be effective witnesses to God's love for us and our life with Him in recovery. To achieve this, we must daily spend time with God in His word and seek His direction for our lives. Welcoming the input of others will help as well. As we humbly and gently share our message, and learn from the experience, strength, and hope of others, one moment at a time, one day at a time, we will build our lives and have a successful, satisfying year.

Walking an unknown way with God is more secure than travelling an old familiar path on our own. It will truly bring a "Happy New Year" to each of us.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, As I go forward in this new year I purposefully put my hand into Your hand and choose to walk with You in the path You have prepared for me. I welcome Your Holy Spirit to be my guide me in the way I should take. Amen

COMING BACK

In the Bible Jesus told a story about a father and two sons. (Luke 15:11-31) The younger of the two boys became dissatisfied with life in his father's household and believed that life away from home was more desirable. He asked for his inheritance before it was due to him, and then went out and squandered on wild living all that he had been given. While he had money, he had friends, but his money soon ran out and he found himself alone.

Often when we come into recovery, we find ourselves where the prodigal son was, alone and worn out by sin, with a life that is unmanageable.

God offers us a purposeful life, but we want our own way and think that God's way is restrictive rather than protective. We just want to have fun and give no thought to the consequences of the choices we make. The sad truth is, we end up broken and needy by following self-will rather than God's will.

Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance. Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live. (Isaiah 55:2-3 NKJV)

The father of this boy was continually longing for the return of his son and when he saw him travelling along the road, he ran to meet him. God is always pursuing us with His love. When we turn to Him and repent of our rebellion, He welcomes us with open arms and gives us the privilege of being called His precious child.

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! (1 John 3:1 NIV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Forgive me for the times I have rejected You in favour of my own self-centeredness. I ask for Your forgiveness. Thank You for adopting me as Your precious child and please help me to follow Your ways in everything I say and do. Amen

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TAKING INVENTORY

At various times on our recovery journey we are asked to take personal inventory. Why is it important to make a frank and honest assessment of ourselves?

For numerous reasons we have participated in actions that were both destructive and addictive. We feared pain, craved pleasure, desired power, and wanted to live life in our own way. We tried to find pleasure in sinful behaviours and/or addictive substances. To satisfy our self-centered desires, we mercilessly manipulated some who were as broken as ourselves and others who tried to help us. Now we have come to realize we need to find a new way of life and must take the time to identify what needs to change.

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The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is? But I, the Lord, search all hearts and examine secret motives. I give all people their due rewards, according to what their actions deserve. (Jeremiah 17:9-10 NLT)

God tells us that knowing the truth is a building block to freedom. The Bible tells us that we are unable to be honest with ourselves – all of us have hearts that don't know how to face truth. We find ways to justify and minimize what's wrong and too readily find excuses to avoid some issues altogether.

As we inventory our past behaviour, our relationships, and our character defects or strengths, it's important that we invite God's Holy Spirit to reveal those things in us that need forgiving and healing and making right.

God already knows our deepest thoughts and he understands what the Spirit is saying, because the Spirit speaks for his people in the way that agrees with what God wants. (Romans 8:27 ERV)

Taking personal inventory is a positive step because it helps us identify those things that are obstacles to living the fulfilling life that God is offering us. God's principles are provided for us in the Bible. We need to trust God and obey them.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I need You to help me look at my heart and my life and identify those things that hinder me from having a loving relationship with You and with others. Please give me the desire and the power to make changes as they are revealed. Amen

JUST FOR TODAY – NOTICE THE GIFTS

Just for today, I will take time to notice the gifts in me, in others, and in my surroundings and let the rest go.

Brothers and sisters, continue to think about what is good and worthy of praise. Think about what is true and honorable and right and pure and beautiful and respected. (Philippians 4:8 ERV)

Both in the Bible and in the “12 Promises of AA” we are encouraged to trust that, as we build our lives on the unfailing love of God and maintain our sobriety, we will notice certain gifts coming alive in us. They include experiencing new freedom and joy in life; seeing how our experience can benefit others; shifting from self-seeking to interest in others; growing in the ability to handle situations that used to baffle us. The best gift is saved for the last, we will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.

Give thanks to the Father. He has made you able to have what he has promised to give all his holy people, who live in the light. (Colossians 1:12 ERV)

While it is necessary to maintain an inventory around our character defects, so we don't slip into destructive attitudes and behaviour, it's also strengthening and life-giving to pay attention to what is changing and growing and becoming more beautiful in our minds and hearts.

One of the “12 Promises” reminds us that “We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it.” God promises to use each of our lives to show His goodness and glory to others – that includes our story of how He brought us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

God chose you to be his people. You are royal priests. You are a holy nation. You are God's special treasure. You are all these things so that you can give him praise. God brought you out of darkness into his wonderful light. (1 Peter 2:9 NIRV)

Prayer: Loving God, Thank You for the many blessings I have already experienced in my life with You in recovery. Help me to notice even more today. Amen

God promises to use each of our lives to show His goodness and glory to others.

CHARACTER STRENGTH – COOPERATION

Many of us in our life in addiction had our character shaped by isolation and getting our own way in any way that we could. Now in recovery, it is challenging to live in agreement with people who have ideas and ways of doing things that are different from our own. For healthy relationships to be formed and our sobriety sustained we will need to develop the character quality of cooperation.

Live in harmony with each other. Don't be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don't think you know it all! Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. (Romans 12:16, Ephesians 4:3 NLT)

When we cooperate, we all work together towards a common goal.

When we cooperate, we all work together towards a common goal. This doesn't mean we all do or act the same. We each have our own personality and a role to play but we take time to listen to one another, to support each other, and together find a way to make things better for everyone involved. Cooperation requires that we learn from others by letting go of our old way of thinking and behaving, and by allowing ourselves to try something new. While we are working with others it is important not to hide in silence but to voice our opinion on an issue or ask a related question that will bring some fresh insight to a discussion or event.

How wonderful and pleasant it is when brothers live together in harmony! (Psalm 133:1 NLT)

Developing a pattern of cooperating with others will require us to communicate what we are feeling, and this should help us get over hurt feelings and approval seeking. It may also require that we lay down a bullying attitude or a habit of yelling offensive words. As we learn new ways of interacting with others God will strengthen and encourage us and bring us to that place of peace which surpasses all understanding.

It's not easy to find our place and be cooperative after being detached for so long, but the effect that a new way of living brings is certainly worth the effort.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You made me to live in cooperation with others. Forgive me for the times I tirelessly voiced 'my' opinion while wanting 'my' will to be done, and for the many other ways I was hard to get along with. I ask for Your help to be cooperative with others and for the guidance of Your Holy Spirit to teach me ways I can build healthy relationships. Amen

BREAKING SHAME'S POWER

Shame is a powerful emotion which repeatedly tells us that we are worthless, unacceptable, unforgiveable, and have no place in a loving relationship. Pictures of embarrassing happenings tend to replay in our minds and intensify our shame. However, God stands ready to forgive what we have done and help us repair the harm caused to others and to ourselves. The only way to rid ourselves of the shame we feel is to ask for and receive the forgiveness of God for our actions. When we accept Jesus' death as payment for ALL our sins, God will work to bring restoration and healing wherever an event has caused harm.

He [Jesus] has come to do away with sin by offering himself. People have to die once. After that, God will judge them. In the same way, Christ was offered up once. He took away the sins of many people. (Hebrews 9:26-28 NIRV)

People who live in shame are bound up with fear. They build walls. They are terrified of getting to know themselves. They mask their faces and live a role that does not reflect who they truly are. They constantly seek the approval of others. They are unable to live in a mutually healthy relationship because, at the core of their being, they believe they can never measure up to what the other person wants them to be.

God invites us to turn away from our sins and receive forgiveness. God wants us to be who we truly are – the person He created us to be. God wants us to come to Him just as we are, shame and all. As we wholeheartedly give our will and life over to God's care, our old shameful self is put to death and we are raised to a new life without stain or blemish. The solution to shame is to receive what God is offering, see what God sees in us, and repeat what God is saying about us.

The Spirit that we received is not a spirit that makes us slaves again and causes us to fear. The Spirit that we have makes us God's chosen children. And with that Spirit we cry out, "Abba, Father." And the Spirit himself speaks to our spirits and makes us sure that we are God's children. (Romans 8:15-16 ERV)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I admit that in the past I have done shameful things. I repent of what I have done and thank You for dying on the cross to pay the penalty for my sin and shame. I accept Your death in my place, I believe I am free from all sin and have become a child of God. From this day forward, I choose to follow Your ways and rely on all Your promises. Amen

The solution to shame is receive what God is offering, see what God sees in us, and repeat what God is saying about us.

PRAY

Often people who have no relationship with God will pray when they are in trouble or when they urgently need help in a time of great distress. Does God hear their prayer? Yes! Will He answer their prayer? Yes! How God answers their prayer is up to God for He knows the heart of the person praying and will answer according to His perfect will for that person. God is much more generous than any human being and He alone knows the end from the beginning. When we give our will and life over to the care of God, we are promised that His eyes watch over us and His ears are attentive to all our prayers.

When we give our will and life over to the care of God, we are promised that His eyes watch over us and His ears are attentive to all our prayers.

The Lord watches over everyone who obeys him, and he listens to their prayers. But he opposes everyone who does evil. Ask me, and I will tell you things that you don't know and can't find out. (1 Peter 3:12; Jeremiah 33:3 CEV)

We who have accepted Jesus as our Lord and Saviour are God's beloved children. Like any good parent, God is aware of His children's needs. The closer we get to our Heavenly Father the more He will speak with us. God's desire is that we will grow in knowledge and wisdom through prayer and meditation on His Word as recorded in the Bible. To help us, God fills us with His Holy Spirit who gives us understanding of His principles and the power to carry them out. God also enables us to love and care for others as He loves and cares for us.

But I tell you to love your enemies and pray for anyone who mistreats you. Then you will be acting like your Father in heaven. He makes the sun rise on both good and bad people. And he sends rain for the ones who do right and for the ones who do wrong. (Matthew 5:44-45 CEV)

God cares about His creation and each person on earth today is benefitting from His goodness. Can you imagine living in any place without the goodness of God?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for being aware of my needs even when I was in rebellion against You. Forgive me for the times I refused to surrender my will and life to Your care because Your principles were opposed to what I wanted to do. From today, I ask You to help me obey Your Word and walk in Your ways in all I say and do. Amen

I CAN'T DO IT ALONE

We come into recovery because we recognize we are powerless over addictive substances, people, or things that we have become dependent on to sustain life as we know it. We know that where we are today is not life-giving and that if we continue on this path it will cause a further downward spiral. Regardless of what we have gained or lost, what we have achieved, or where we have fallen short, we have reached the point where we recognize we can no longer cope with life on our own.

We admit defeat and turn to God for mercy and grace. God assures us that if we get to know and trust Him, He will rescue us and help us do what we cannot do for ourselves. In fact, Jesus said He came to save people exactly like us, in circumstances just like ours.

The Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost. I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners." (Luke 19:10; Matthew 9:13 NLT)

We are not suffering solely because we have misused certain substances or developed destructive habits or co-dependent relationships. We are not suffering because we mistakenly think we were created as a second-class human being because we grew up in a less than perfect environment. We are suffering because we believed the lie that we could meet our own needs and solve our problems in our own way. We are suffering because we chose to believe that masking the unbearable pain inside us with a substance, a habit, or a relationship would give us lasting pleasure and make life worth living. We are suffering because we did not believe our need to have an ongoing relationship with God, above all else, to live successfully.

Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. (2 Corinthians 1:21-22 NIV)

God offers us a new way of life that begins by admitting we cannot do life on our own.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I admit defeat. I am powerless to live life on my own. Without your love and guidance my life truly is unmanageable. I give up trying to meet my own needs. I give up trying to cover my pain and confusion with substances, destructive habits, and unhealthy relationships. Heavenly Father, I turn to You and ask You to bring peace to my heart. Amen

We have reached the point where we recognize we can no longer cope with life on our own.

BECOMING EMOTIONALLY AVAILABLE AGAIN

While living in addiction we were emotionally unavailable to God, to others, and to ourselves. As we now choose for recovery one of the essential areas we need to give attention to is learning how to experience, identify, and deal with our emotions. Grief, shame, unforgiveness, and fear of rejection are just some of the causes of our emotional separation from living life to the full. God created us to be individuals who experience a wide variety of emotions, and He wants to help us recover the satisfying life He has prepared for us.

The only way to healing and becoming emotionally available again is to open our hearts to God's unfailing love for us.

We know that God loves us. We depend on it. God is love. Anyone who leads a life of love is joined to God and God is joined to them. Love is kind and patient. Love rejoices in the truth, but not in evil. Love is always supportive, loyal, hopeful, and trusting. Love never fails! (1 John 4:16 NIRV, 1 Corinthians 13:4a, 6-8 CEV)

The only way to healing and becoming emotionally available again is to open our hearts to God's unfailing love for us. Because of God's love for us, Jesus died on a cross for our sins so that life to the full would be available to us. We have freedom to choose whether we want this new life that God offers us. We can't earn this life. We need never fear that it will be taken away from us. In the safety of God's love and forgiveness and healing, we can face the truth about every threatening memory and circumstance that we have tried to hide.

I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart. (Ezekiel 36:26 NLT)

Our journey to an emotionally healthy life will likely be taken one step at a time. As we persevere and open our hearts to God, He will accompany us through the healing process. When we feel vulnerable and want to run and hide or just want to shut down, we can call out to God to calm our fears and strengthen us. God truly is the rock that we stand on as well as our Saviour and our Friend.

Prayer: Loving God, I know You created me to experience a healthy and satisfying emotional life, therefore I turn away from fear and invite You to give me new life today. Help me to trust in the safety of Your unfailing love and support. In Your care, help me to love and care for others as You love and care for me. Amen

PRACTICING AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

Practicing an attitude of gratitude – is this just a happy little slogan or is it a way of daily living that will change our outlook on life?

Always be joyful. Never stop praying. Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus. (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 NLT)

Is being thankful in all circumstances the key to a fulfilling life or an impossible command to fulfill?

There is a wonderful story in the Bible that illustrates the gratitude principle. A king and his people were being attacked by some armies who were much larger and stronger than they were. They were under intense pressure and filled with fear. The king's first response was to speak to God about the situation. He called the people together and led them in a prayer which included giving thanks to God for His presence with them, His supreme power over them, and the history of times past when God had helped them.

God's heart was touched by the king's gratitude. Through a prophet, God told the king that the people were not to be afraid or discouraged by the circumstances confronting them for they would not have to fight this battle. The king and his people chose to believe God and to act courageously on God's directions. True to His word, God took care of them. Their part? Sing and give thanks to God. Really? (Read: 2 Chronicles 20:21-24)

Is giving thanks to God for all He has done for us our first response when trouble presents itself? Trusting in God's power and seeking His direction are life recovery principles we need to apply in every challenging situation. Like this king and his people who trusted God to act on their behalf, we will sing and give thanks as we recognize that God, through Jesus, has already overcome and eliminated the enemies we think are stronger than us.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for always being there for me and for Your promise that You will never leave or forsake me. Help me to acknowledge every good thing You have done for me. I am grateful that as I seek You, and not lean on my own understanding, You will direct my path through every challenge I may encounter. Amen

Is being thankful in all circumstances the key to a fulfilling life or an impossible command to fulfill?

FINDING HEALING IN THE CARE OF GOD

In the Bible we read of all the good things that God will do for those who have given their will and life into His care. God has forgiven all our sins and made us new – as if we had never sinned. Accepting Jesus as our Saviour and Lord means we are committed to follow His principles in all our affairs. This is the path to healing of all the wounds we have sustained and tried to deal with in our own powerless way.

My child, pay attention to what I say. Listen carefully to my words. Don't lose sight of them. Let them penetrate deep into your heart, for they bring life to those who find them, and healing to their whole body. (Proverbs 4:20-22 NLT)

It is in getting to know how much our Father cares for us that we can come close and ask Him to heal our deep wounds and restore us to sanity.

Our Heavenly Father has adopted us into His family and now we are children of God. In His lavish love for us, we inherit the grace and favour which God promises to those who love him. Through prayer and meditation on the Scriptures we improve our conscious contact with God and become familiar with all His ways. It is in getting to know how much our Father cares for us that we can come close and ask Him to heal our deep wounds and restore us to sanity.

Let all that I am praise the Lord; may I never forget the good things he does for me. He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases. He redeems me from death and crowns me with love and tender mercies. He fills my life with good things. My youth is renewed like the eagle's! (Psalm 103:2-5 NLT)

When we seek God and genuinely believe that He exists and will do as He says, God promises to reward us. We need to persevere through our doubts and fears and believe that God is the power greater than ourselves who will restore us in body, mind, and spirit. We need not be anxious about anything, but in prayer and thanksgiving, present our requests to God and ask Him to meet our needs.

Stretch out your hand with healing power; may miraculous signs and wonders be done through the name of your holy servant Jesus. (Acts 4:30 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I commit to meditate on Your Word as recorded in the Bible and by faith believe what You say, for with You all things are possible. Amen

LET'S HAVE A PARTY

How many of us have fallen to places in life where we never thought we would find ourselves again? Our concerned family and friends begged us to get help but, in our self-centered pride, we just continued to walk our rebellious path and we sank deeper and deeper into the darkness of addiction. Finally, in the chaos of our hopeless condition we called out to the Lord and He helped us.

I was pushed back and about to fall, but the Lord helped me. The Lord is my strength and my defense; he has become my salvation. Shouts of joy and victory resound in the tents of the righteous: "The Lord's right hand has done mighty things! The Lord's right hand is lifted high; the Lord's right hand has done mighty things!" I will not die but live, and will proclaim what the Lord has done. The Lord has chastened me severely, but he has not given me over to death. (Psalm 118:13-18 NIV)

Jesus said there is a party in heaven every time one lost soul turns their will and life over to the care of God. What a party they had for us! They celebrated how the Lord lifted us up, held our hand, and guided us to a new life.

As we walk in this new life, we celebrate each day the many wonderful things God has done for us. The truth of God's Word is replacing our distorted belief system. We are becoming stronger in body, mind, and spirit. We are being healed and restored. We are becoming willing to forgive those who have caused us pain because we are so thankful that God has forgiven us for the harm we have caused others. All of these are truly worth celebrating!

The Lord has not allowed us to die but to live in the power of His Holy Spirit and proclaim to others the great things He has done for us. We may even find that because we have been healed and restored to new life, our family and friends may want to rejoice and celebrate with us as well. So, let's all join in God's party!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You that I will not die but live and carry the message of Jesus and His redeeming work to others. I am forever grateful that You love and care for me and have restored me to a meaningful, purposeful life that is worth celebrating. Amen

Jesus said there is a party in heaven every time one lost soul turns their will and life over to the care of God.

HALF MEASURES AVOIDED US NOTHING

To experience success in our life with God in recovery we must make a commitment to be thorough in our search for truth and then apply each learned truth to our thoughts and behaviours.

Lord, teach me how you want me to live. Do this so that I will depend on you, my faithful God. Give me a heart that doesn't want anything more than to worship you. (Psalm 86:11 NIRV)

**"... we
beg of
you to be
fearless
and
thorough
from the
very
start."
Big Book of
AA**

The founders of AA organized the steps in a particular way. Their goal was that those who followed these steps would experience a spiritual awakening. They knew that experiencing God's forgiveness and unconditional love would bring peace of mind from the obsession to pick up. Picking and choosing which steps we will complete, and how many of them we will wholeheartedly give ourselves to, will not provide the spiritual awakening we desire. Instead, we will find ourselves continuing to run on our own power and self-will.

It's why at each AA meeting we are reminded: *"Half measures avoided us nothing. We stood at the turning point. We asked His (God's) protection and care with complete abandon We thought we could find an easier, softer way. But we could not. With all the earnestness at our command, we beg of you to be fearless and thorough from the very start."* (Big Book p.58)

These thoughts simply echo what God has said for thousands of years through the scriptures. They are tried and true principles for those who struggle with addictive and destructive life habits and for those who love them. We must make a choice to be all in, even when it's not easy. Difficult times will come. Emotions will go up and down. People will do crazy things around us. The only thing that matters is that we wholeheartedly abandon ourselves and all our concerns to the care of God. If we do this, we will find sobriety and the peace that we seek.

Serve him [God] faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you. Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous be shaken. (1 Samuel 12:24; Psalm 55:22 NIV)

Prayer: *Loving God, Help me to be fearless and thorough in all I do from this moment on. I want to give You every opportunity to transform my life. Amen*

JUST FOR TODAY – UNAFRAID

Just for today I will be unafraid, believing that as I trust in God with all my heart and lean not on my own understanding, He will lead me along a good path.

Facing today without fear – that's a tall order. It's clear from just a brief look at slogans and acronyms from A.A. and N.A. that FEAR dwells in the minds and emotions of many people. Here are some examples: **FEAR** = Failure Expected And Received. **FEAR** = Forget Everything And Run. **FEAR** = Frantic Effort to Appear Real.

In our addiction, we cycled through desperation and failure for so long that we forgot who we once were. We forgot what real life was about. When we were confronted with the possibility of relationship or intimacy with another, or meaningful work and growth, we froze with fear. How could we move forward when everyday life events filled us with fear of the unknown? What were we to do?

On our own life is impossible, but what we've come to believe is, that when we turn our will and life over to the care of God we are no longer alone. God promises to be with us and show us a way forward even when we are unable to see a way. All we need to do is seek God's will for us and follow His path.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take. (Proverbs 3:5-6 NLT)

There are a couple of acronyms for fear that may be of help in our journey. **FEAR** = False Evidence Appearing Real. **FEAR** = Face Everything And Recover. When fear tells us we can't move ahead and be successful, it's important to remember that this is untrue. God has the power to do more than we can ask or imagine. When we think our past is too much to face we can reject that thought for the lie that it is. Our past does not define our future. When we believe in Jesus and repent of our past sins our old self is gone, and we are born again to a new life. Just for today I will put my trust in what God says and not be afraid.

We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin. (Romans 6:6 NLT)

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, Thank You that my sin is nailed to Your cross. Today I turn my will and life over to Your care. Fill me to overflowing with the power of Your Holy Spirit, so fear will lose its control in my life. I will live unafraid each day knowing I am Your beloved child. Amen*

**Just for
today I
will trust
God and
be
unafraid.**

CONTINUING SURRENDER

Living in recovery and following the Twelve Steps is a spiritual journey. It requires a conscious commitment to a spiritual way of life. In one of the Steps, we are invited to turn our will and our life over to the care of God as we know and understand Him today.

You will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you,” declares the Lord. (Jeremiah 29:12-14a NIV)

Surrendering to God is an everyday, moment-by-moment, ongoing process of turning away from self-will and choosing instead for the will of God in every situation.

When we came into recovery, most of us admitted that our way of doing things had resulted in the pain, frustration, sickness, and despair we experienced. We came to God because we knew we needed help, or because someone shared with us that God is the Higher Power who restored them to sanity.

Surrendering to God is an everyday, ongoing, moment-by-moment process of turning away from self-will and choosing instead for the will of God in every situation. This always involves action on our part. If we say that we have entrusted our life to God but do not make changes in how we think and act, then we are only fooling ourselves.

We may not understand how everything will work together for our good, but we can step out in faith today and choose to do whatever God says works.

To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy—to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our

Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen. (Jude 1:24-25 NIV)

Prayer: Loving God, I don’t understand how life works and what tomorrow may bring but today I choose to turn my will and life over to Your care. As I pray and meditate on the Scriptures, help me to know You and Your ways, and give me understanding of Your will for my life and the power to carry it out. Amen

LOVED THROUGH DIFFICULT TIMES

When problems arise it's easy to forget that God cares. We often feel alone and vulnerable. Daily life continues regardless of the heartache we are feeling and somehow we must cope. We feel like orphans with no one to care for us. We assume God also has abandoned us and forget that He has promised to help us. However, God does not forget His beloved. We just need to call on Him and He will answer us.

The Lord says, “I will rescue those who love me. I will protect those who trust in my name. When they call on me, I will answer; I will be with them in trouble. I will rescue and honor them. (Psalm 91:14-15 NLT)

In difficult times, rather than running from God we need to draw closer to Him and let His unfailing love ease the pain we are feeling. We live in a broken world where sin and sorrow have impacted everyone. Perhaps we’ve wondered where God was when bad things happened to us. Perhaps we did not seek God for help because we were unaware that He was right there beside us.

Jesus took all sin, suffering, and sorrow on Himself when He died on the cross in our place. When we put our trust in Jesus’ finished work here on earth, God offers us forgiveness, healing, and comfort, and when our earthly life is over, life with Him forevermore. Regardless of life’s circumstances, God promises that He will never leave us and will hold us steady until we can effectively stand on solid ground again.

The eternal God is your refuge, and his everlasting arms are under you. Yet it was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down, and we thought his troubles were a punishment from God, a punishment for his own sins! But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed. (Deuteronomy 33:27, Isaiah 53:4-5 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I don’t understand suffering, but I know that You do and that You offer me forgiveness, healing, and comfort because I am Your precious child. I need You to hold me close today. Take my hand and steady me. Thank You for Your unfailing love for me. Amen

In difficult times, rather than running from God, we need to draw closer to Him and let His unfailing love ease the pain we are feeling.

AN ACCURATE VIEW OF OUR RELATIONSHIPS

An important part of recovery is coming to an honest view of what happened in our relationships. Regardless of the excuses we may make, we need to admit that at times we were the ones who caused harm to others. We need to come to an understanding of the underlying reason for our actions. We need to take responsibility for our part in the breakdown of any relationship. As we go forward, we need to learn the basic principles for building healthy caring relationships with others.

An important part of recovery is coming to an honest view of what happened in our relationships.

When we are upset, speaking in anger, or using silence or distancing to deal with a relationship problem, it will have the impact of wounding the other person. While outright cheating and stealing may not be part of our life right now, it is still too easy for us to lie and deceive and manipulate things for our own advantage. Have we learned to let complaining and blaming go or are we still using them to excuse our poor attitude?

Do to others as you would like them to do to you. Continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins. (Luke 6:31; 1 Peter 4:8 NLT)

Forgiving those who have harmed us and releasing them and their actions into God's care is an important part of rebuilding relationships. Forgiveness turns our attention to God and away from the person who harmed us. Forgiveness establishes God as the source of our healing and restoration, for God has promised to work all things together for our good and His glory.

Don't be angry with each other, but forgive each other. If you feel someone has wronged you, forgive them. Forgive others because the Lord forgave you. (Colossians 3:13 ERV)

Admitting any part we may have played in an incident; receiving healing from God; making amends; forgiving those who have offended us; living respectfully with others; this is how we move forward in building caring and healthy relationships.

Prayer: Gracious God, You created me to live in loving relationship with You and with others. Help me to do what is within my power to restore my broken relationships and to trust You to support me as I strive to build strong and caring relationships in the future. Amen

FEELING VULNERABLE

While we were living in addiction our agenda each day was completely centered on meeting our daily needs. We used our substance of choice to help cope with the emptiness, the unbearable pain, the loneliness, and other feelings we were unwilling to deal with. Now in recovery, we are aware that God has promised to meet all our needs. Are we willing to let Him do so? When we feel vulnerable, where or with whom are we seeking to find help?

God invites us, ***Call on me when you are in trouble, and I will rescue you, and you will give me glory.*** (Psalm 50:15 NLT)

No one likes feeling vulnerable but stuffing our feelings just does not work. When we finally admitted that we were powerless over our destructive dependencies, we chose to get help and joined a recovery program. Our life was truly unmanageable and we felt empty inside. We stopped using our substance of choice and started the journey of living in a healthy way. As we continue on our journey, we may start to feel vulnerable and wonder if it is really possible to handle our life situations without the help of our dependency. How will we manage the devastating pain of loneliness, frustration, disappointment, and even shame, without picking up again?

Success in recovery requires living in truth, and the truth is, without God, our lives are not complete. That is why we struggle with fear when we are feeling vulnerable and powerless. God, and trusted people around us, assure us that there is a positive way forward. They remind us that, step by step, we will come to know and believe in a Power greater than ourselves who can restore us to sanity. God is all-powerful. God is with us. God cares for us. God will guide us. The peace we desire will come when we completely turn our will and our lives over to the care of God.

God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble. (Psalm 46:1 NLT)

Prayer: Loving God, I confess that I am powerless, and my life is unmanageable. Help me to sort out my vulnerable feelings. When I am fearful and overwhelmed, I ask you to help me trust in Your Word in the Bible which says, You care about me, You are with me, and You are all-powerful. Help me to believe and receive and act on all that You are for me. Amen

Step by step we will come to know and believe in a Power greater than ourselves who will restore us to sanity.

EASY DOES IT

"Easy Does It" is one of the most well-known slogans in recovery circles. Some 12-step groups choose it as their name. This slogan can be found numerous times in the Big Book of A.A. and elsewhere in recovery literature. Its main thought is to help us slow down and relax and take a measured approach to recovery, to problem solving, or to whatever situation that seems too big or too complicated for us.

Jesus taught us the way of "easy does it" when he told us: ***Don't worry about tomorrow. Each day has enough trouble of its own. Tomorrow will have its own worries.*** (Matthew 6:34 ERV)

When we trust that God is good and that our will and our lives are safely settled in His care, we won't feel like we have to fix everybody and everything.

Jesus used the example of a little child to remind us that we need to keep things simple and take it easy.

You must change your thinking and become like little children. If you don't do this, you will never enter God's kingdom. The greatest person in God's kingdom is the one who makes himself humble like this child. (Matthew 18:2-4 ERV)

Letting tension get the best of us and becoming stressed out will never put us in a problem-solving frame of mind. God is good and when we trust that, our will and our lives can safely settle in His care. We won't feel like we need to fix everybody and everything.

When things are too fearful for a little child, they simply run to a loving parent for protection and support. As their parent hugs and holds them close, they quiet down because they know their parent will do what is necessary to sort out the situation. When things are difficult for us, we need to bring our problems to God and remember that "easy does it." As our hearts are quieted in His love, we will

hear His guidance to know the next right step to take.

God says: ***Only in returning to me and resting in me will you be saved. In quietness and confidence is your strength.*** (Isaiah 30:15 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You are bigger than my biggest problem and have a good plan for my life. Help me to quiet my heart and have confidence that You will show me Your will for my life. Please give me the patience to slow down and remember that "easy does it." Amen

THE GIFT OF PEACE AND SERENITY

Peace and serenity are gifts to be received. To make room for them in our hearts requires surrender on our part. We don't have to be right, look good, or be understood, and we don't need everything around us to be peaceful and pleasant. When we live for God and our hearts and minds are surrendered to Him, we will experience peace.

It is God's desire that we live in peace regardless of the circumstances of our lives. In fact, being at peace is one of the ways we will know whether we have truly given our will and our lives over to God's care and are allowing His Holy Spirit to guide and direct us.

The Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23 NLT)

God is working around us and in us every day of our lives. Not all circumstances change in a moment. God knows that life will feel rich sometimes and empty at other times. When we seek to follow a new and healthy way of life, we will face challenges that seem too much for us to handle. While some effort from us will be required, we can rely on God's help and encouragement throughout the process. When we choose to make right choices and do the next right thing, we can safely leave all the consequences with God.

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7 NLT)

Peace and contentment are the fruit of making good choices every day.

Prayer: Loving God, Thank You for the gift of peace that I receive as I surrender my will and life into Your care. When I am not at peace, help me to seek You and determine how I have wandered from Your ways. Please give me the strength to do the next right thing and get back to Your path of peace. Amen

Being at peace is one of the ways we know whether we have truly given our will and our lives over to God's care and are allowing His Holy Spirit to guide and direct us.

DON'T BE A PHONY

Being a phony is an intensely tiring way to live. Giving false impressions and lying to cover up attitudes or behaviours drains us of joy and energy. Shoving “our truth” in someone’s face is disrespectful and more irritating than helpful, but how can we be sure we are not being fake? Where is the balance between being kind and being honest?

Our responsibility is to be truthful, kind, and respectful. We are to love God with all our heart and love our neighbour as ourselves. There will be some close trusted friends with whom we openly share our burdens and our frustrations, but with most people, positive, uplifting, and respectful talk should be our normal behaviour. There is always something in others to be grateful for no matter how challenged we may feel when communicating with them.

How can we make sure we are not the ones who are being fake?

God gave us this command: If we love God, we must also love each other as brothers and sisters. (1 John 4:21 ERV)

We also need friends with whom we can share our sorrows and burdens and there is a time when we need to let ourselves be vulnerable and share our hurts and frustrations. We need to welcome honest feedback even when it makes us uncomfortable. We all have blind spots. We need honest support from sponsors and trusted friends. We don't need someone who is just going to smile and be nice to us while we wallow in self-pity or slide into harmful patterns of living.

You can trust what your friend says, even when it hurts. But your enemies want to hurt you, even when they act nice. (Proverbs 27:6 ERV)

The more we live as respectful and authentic persons who befriend others, the more we will experience God’s blessing of true friends who are both caring and supportive.

So speak encouraging words to one another. Build up hope so you’ll all be together in this, no one left out, no one left behind. I know you’re already doing this; just keep on doing it. (1 Thessalonians 5:11 MSG)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Please help me to live as a genuine, positive person. My desire is to always pay attention to caring people who take the time to encourage me with wise feedback, and to speak the truth in love when I am communicating with others. Amen

POWER GREATER THAN OURSELVES

We all need hope. Today we are affirming the hope we will experience when what has been impossible for us to do on our own becomes possible as we reach out for help to a Power greater than ourselves.

And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him. (Hebrews 11:6 NLT)

The Bible tells us that the key to life is in the “higher power” we look to. The God of the Bible is all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-loving. He is the one who created the world. He is the God who planned for us to have a loving and caring relationship with Him, and with others. Through Jesus, God made provision for the forgiveness of the sins of all humans. Step 2 of the 12-Step program of AA invites us to get to know this powerful God who is rich in love and mercy towards each one of us.

We will be more eager to come to God, our Higher Power, if we see Him as the one who proclaims, “***he rewards those who sincerely seek him***”. Our faith may not have matured to this point, but we can start by asking God to help us have more faith.

Belief in the God of the Bible will result in forgiveness for our sins, acceptance of who we are in Christ, and the availability of God’s strength and unfailing love to help us be the person He created us to be.

“Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.” (Hebrews 11:1 NLT)

Prayer: Dear God, I am not sure about who You are right now, but I am coming to believe that there is a Power greater than myself who can restore me to sanity. I believe that You brought me to this point in my life and therefore I have hope that You will make me new as I trust You and follow Your ways in all my affairs. Please help me! Amen

It is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him.
(Hebrews 11:6)

CONFRONTING DENIAL

A healthy foundation for life with God in recovery includes seeking truth in all our affairs. Our goal is to know what is good and recognize what is harmful so we can correctly identify what will bring good into our lives or what has power to negatively impact us. God's word is a trustworthy source of truth in directing us to new ways of life. We need to confront any denial of God's truth and invite Him to show us where our thinking and perceiving have become confused. God's wisdom and power will help us make the changes that are necessary.

We need to confront any denial of God's truth and invite Him to show us where our thinking and perceiving have become confused.

Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. (Psalm 139:23-24 NIV, Matthew 11:28 NLT)

In recovery we are taught to accept responsibility for our actions. We admit that our actions bring consequences. In the past, some of us tried to deceive ourselves into thinking we could escape the consequences of what we had done. Now, with some time and learning in recovery, we know the truth that God has made accountability a necessary part of human existence.

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. (Galatians 6:7-8 NIV)

The good news is that God helps us to be accountable and make amends to those we have harmed. God wants us to live with self-worth before Him and others. We often fear humiliation and pain that might result when we acknowledge what we have done. However, finally

admitting the truth actually brings us peace even though it means facing our wrongful actions. Truth leads to freedom. Deceit and denial lead to bondage and death.

Prayer: Gracious God, Please help me to fearlessly commit to speaking and acting on the truth of Your Word. I want to live in the freedom that comes from putting Your principles into practice in all my affairs, so that I may have rest in the blessing and peace that You promise. Amen.

FINDING HOPE

A person with hope looks forward with reasonable confidence to something that will take place. In recovery we are hoping that the bondage to our dependency will be overcome, and that we will have freedom to nurture a new life focus. Our personal history has confirmed that we do not have the power in ourselves that is needed to produce change. So where can we get this power that enables us to have hope?

Now glory be to God, who by his mighty power at work within us is able to do far more than we would ever dare to ask or even dream of—infinitely beyond our highest prayers, desires, thoughts, or hopes. (Ephesians 3:20 TLB)

When we repent of our wrongs and give our will and life over to the care of God, the Spirit of God works together with our spirit to give us conscious knowledge that we are children of our Heavenly Father. We have hope because we are loved and cared for by our Father in Heaven and by His extended family here on earth. Some of our brothers and sisters will have previously travelled the same path that we are on and, as we listen attentively to them share their experience, strength, and hope, we will be encouraged.

Those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. The Spirit you received doesn't make you slaves. Otherwise you would live in fear again. Instead, the Holy Spirit you received made you God's adopted child. By the Spirit's power we call God Abba. Abba means Father. (Romans 8:14-15 NIRV)

Instead of being alone in our anxiety we have a community of people around us who are willing to share the blessings that God has poured out on them. Our expectation of staying clean and sober is being inspired by those who have walked this path before us and hope is growing in us for what we once thought to be impossible.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13 NIRV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Your great love and tender mercy is fueling my hope of being free from my unmanageable lifestyle and is encouraging me to practice Your principles in all my affairs. My hope is that Your mighty Power at work within me will do far more than I could ever ask for or even dream about. Amen

We have hope because we are loved and cared for by our Father in Heaven and by His extended family here on earth.

WISDOM – TIME

There is a right time for everything, and everything on earth will happen at the right time. (Ecclesiastes 3:1 ERV)

When God created the earth and everything in it, He did so in a sequence that made provision for the nurturing and pleasure of humans that He created. At just the right time everything was set in place for human survival including a garden for them to live in.

This just might be the right time for us to give our will and life over to the care of God.

When we were made in the secret place of our mother's womb God also had a plan for each of us. He planned where we would be born and where we would live, so that in that place we would search for Him and find Him.

God began by making one man, and from him he made all the different people who live everywhere in the world. He decided exactly when and where they would live. God wanted people to look for him, and perhaps in searching all around for him, they would find him. But he is not far from any of us. (Acts 17:26-27 ERV)

Perhaps we drifted into addiction because we believed the circumstances and place of our birth were not favorable to us. We were born into a sinful world and perhaps experienced others' unkind actions towards us. We might have a hard time believing that God is good and that He truly desires us to live a pleasing and purposeful life.

God is aware of who we are and of our circumstances. God longs for us to seek Him and to ask for His wisdom to follow His good plan for our lives.

In the Scriptures God says, ***"When the time came, I listened to you, and when you needed help, I came to save you." That time has come. This is the day for you to be saved.*** (2 Corinthians 6:2 CEV)

There is a right time for everything on earth. Today is the right time for us to give our will and life over to the care of God who is not far from any one of us.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Your wisdom is infinite and You say this is the day for me to be saved. Today, I choose to give my will and life over to Your care believing that You will lead me to the pleasing, purposeful life You have planned for me. Amen

DEVELOPING CHARACTER – LOYALTY

What is loyalty? Someone who is loyal is dependable and will do what they have committed to do. They are supportive even when the going gets tough.

In our addiction, loyalty and keeping our commitments was not something we thought much about. Our only loyalty focus was on meeting the urgent demands of our dependency. Nothing else mattered to us. In contrast, our dependency was never loyal to us because it did not fulfill its promise of a lasting feeling of well-being. Even though we faithfully fulfilled our dependency's demands, it was never satisfied and only wanted more. It made us sick in body, mind, and spirit.

Your father is the devil, and you do exactly what he wants. He has always been a murderer and a liar. There is nothing truthful about him. He speaks on his own, and everything he says is a lie. Not only is he a liar himself, but he is also the father of all lies. (John 8:44 CEV)

When we give our will and life over to the care of God, we make a commitment to God and He makes a commitment to us. God is loyal to fulfill all the promises He makes to us. Do our actions show loyalty in following the ways of God? Are we willing to give the same loyalty in our commitment to God as we did to the demands of our dependency?

Today we have a fresh opportunity to not just "talk the talk" but to "walk the walk". If we remain in God's love and care and follow His principles in all our affairs, we will develop the character quality of being loyal to God and to others. We will then have the fullness of life we are seeking.

Your love reaches higher than the heavens, and your loyalty extends beyond the clouds. Answer my prayers and use your powerful arm to give us victory. Then the people you love will be safe. (Psalm 108:4, 6 CEV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for loving and caring for me. Your loyalty never fails for You continue to work everything in my life together for my good. Help me to be unyielding in my loyalty to You and to others, and to follow Your guidance in all I say and do. Amen

We have a fresh opportunity to not just "talk the talk" but to "walk the walk" as we promise to be loyal to God and to others.

KNOWING FREEDOM AND A NEW HAPPINESS

In the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous there is a section on making amends and sorting things out with our families. In this section there is a paragraph naming twelve promises that we will celebrate *"before we are half-way through."* The first of these promises is, *"We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness."* Are these empty words, promises for the select few, or are they the on-going experience of old-timers of AA? Is there a chance this can be a reality for me?

Christ has set us free to enjoy our freedom. So remain strong in the faith. Don't let the chains of slavery hold you again. (Galatians 5:1 NIRV)

When we believe God's promise to free us from the bondage of our former lifestyle, we will begin to experience the freedom that gives us hope.

After having lived in a self-centered addictive lifestyle, living in sobriety may seem like hard work. Working the steps, particularly the making of amends to those we have harmed and being careful to do so in a way that would not injure them or others, takes all the courage and care that we are developing. With each restored relationship we experience increased freedom and hope.

Memories from our past do not need to hold us down. Fear of what others might say or do no longer needs to squeeze us into a mold that is something other than our true self. God lives in us so we can carry the good news to others of how He changed us, and how He is ready to do that for anyone who comes to Him. God will give us words to share that will comfort those who are sad and those who are caught in their own resentment and fears, even if their fear and bitterness was the result of their own doing.

The Spirit of the Lord God is on me. The Lord has chosen me to tell good news to the poor and to comfort those

who are sad. He sent me to tell the captives and prisoners that they have been set free. (Isaiah 61:1 ERV)

God is working in all of us today. Our responsibility is to trust God, do our part, and then relax and enjoy the freedom and happiness we have been given.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for my sobriety and for the freedom to live in a new way of peace and blessing towards others. Help me to stay strong, trusting You to continue to work in my life and, as I make amends, bring peace to the hearts of those I have harmed. In Your unfailing love and care for all of us, may we find true freedom and happiness. Amen

CHARACTER DEFECT – IMPATIENCE

How many times in a day do we struggle with the character defect of impatience? Things do not happen as quickly as we thought they would. Someone isn't meeting our needs in the way we thought they should. We even think God is slow in how and when He responds to our prayers – particularly when we tell Him what we think needs done immediately. We feel stressed, worried, and irritated and since we think no one cares, we decide we better do what we need to do to "get this show on the road." Too often the immediate action we take causes more trouble for us than we could ever have anticipated.

I hold you by your right hand — I, the Lord your God, and I say to you, don't be afraid. I am here to help you. Let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up. (Isaiah 41:13, Galatians 6:9 NLT)

At its root, impatience is really unbelief in a good God. God promises that He will always be there for us and that all things will work together for our good. However, we struggle to believe that we are watched over and cared for by God. In other words, impatience is really one expression of our self-will as we remove our will and life from God's care – and we pretty much know that disaster awaits us if we choose to do that.

The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent. Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying. (2 Peter 3:9, Romans 12:12 NLT)

It takes time to let go of the impatience we demonstrated in our life in addiction when our focus was on getting what we needed immediately, no matter what. It takes courage to do things God's way rather than in the way of "instant gratification" our society demands. God wants to build character in us as we wait for His perfect plan and timing. Let's take a breath, relax, pray, and give God the opportunity to do what He says He will do.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to trust You with my life – even the parts that frustrate and irritate me. Help me to do the next right thing and leave everything else with You, trusting that You will make all things right as I surrender to Your will. Amen

Impatience is really one expression of our self-will as we remove our will and life from God's care.

PART OF THE SOLUTION RATHER THAN THE PROBLEM

Someone has rightly said, "If you are not part of the solution then you are part of the problem." Our life with God in recovery is about making the transition from being part of the problem to becoming part of the solution. A key word in that slogan is "part." God is now in control of our lives. We make space for Him to do His part and we actively engage in the part He asks us to do.

Call out to me when trouble comes. I will save you and you will honor me. If any of you needs wisdom, you should ask God for it. He will give it to you. God gives freely to everyone and doesn't find fault. (Psalm 50:15, James 1:5 NIRV)

God invites us to trust in His wisdom. Our part is to live with a peaceful heart.

Fear and pride often show up in the middle of a difficult situation and, if we allow these characteristics to govern our thinking process, the problem only gets worse. God has a solution for our trouble that is better than anything our fearful minds could conjure up.

In our new life with God in recovery our first response to a problem should be to call out to God and ask Him for wisdom. Sometimes we will have a major role in the solution and at other times we will need to simply wait and watch God work. One of the hardest lessons to put into practice is that of letting go and giving God a chance to demonstrate that He has a solution. We lack confidence in the waiting process and our impatience often brings added complications.

I will give you words of wisdom. None of your enemies will be able to withstand them or prove them wrong. I am sure that your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life. (Luke 21:15, Psalm 23:6 NIRV)

God invites us to trust in His wisdom. Our part is to live with a peaceful heart, get to know God's ways by studying the Bible, seek good counsel from sponsors and mentors, and pray to be conscious of God's will and have the power to carry it out.

Prayer: Loving God, I want my actions to be part of the solution to any difficulty rather than the creation of more problems. Help me recognize what is helpful and what comes from my defects of character. Help me to live in peace knowing You are in control and Your wisdom is wiser than any solution I could ever conjure up on my own. Amen

NO RECORD OF WRONGS

From the chaos of our dysfunctional lives many of us called out to God with words like, "God if you are really there, please help me". We were unsure if there really was a power greater than ourselves to hear our cry for help. However, in unexpected ways God answered our call. Perhaps through a person He put in our way or with the quiet voice of His Spirit in our hearts, God reminded us of places where we had heard help was available. God then opened those doors for us to enter recovery.

The writer of the following words also cried out to God for help because he could no longer live with the sin in his life.

Out of the depths I cry to you, Lord; Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy. If you, Lord, kept a record of sins, Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness, so that we can, with reverence, serve you. (Psalm 130:1-4 NIV)

When we receive God's forgiveness for our sins, God removes every record of our wrongs and He no longer remembers or holds those sins against us. God does not have a bad memory. He simply chooses not to remember what He has forgiven. What about being accountable for our sins? When Jesus died for our sins, His sacrifice "paid in full" the debt we owed for our rebellion against God. None of us could stand before a Holy God in our unclean condition. We are clean because the blood of Jesus shed on our behalf purifies us from all sin. When we accept Jesus as our Saviour and Lord, we become new persons just as Jesus says. We are born again to a new life. God holds no charges against us. He lifts the burden of shame and guilt from us.

You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. (John 3:7, 17 NIV)

As we come to understand the gift of God's grace to us through the finished work of Jesus, we will be empowered to live the life God has planned for us.

Prayer: Loving God, Thank You for sending Jesus into the world to save me from my sin. I praise You for all You have done, and humbly ask You for even more of You in my life. Amen

When we receive God's forgiveness for our sins, God removes every record of our wrongs.